



Testimonial

**Dr Gwen Collin, ST5 in Liaison
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I am a ST5 (specialty training years 3–5) trainee in General Adult Psychiatry working in West Yorkshire. I became aware of Special Interest Days for higher trainees early in my core psychiatry training. I attended a session at the University of Leeds for Core trainees a few months before starting higher training which was helpful in demonstrating the range of activities that trainees use the time for and gave me ideas of how to go about organizing my special interest time.

In the second year as a higher trainee, I wanted to focus on research as I had limited experience in this area and was aware of the increased emphasis on research in the new curriculum. I approached the LYPFT consultant lead for research, George Crowther, where I work to enquire about opportunities. This led to me becoming involved in a trial that was due to open in the trust, as well as taking on a role as a local trainee “research ambassador”.

I am currently working on a multi-site double-blind, randomized placebo-controlled trial called TOPHAT. The trial’s primary aim is to see whether ondansetron is better than placebo at reducing the frequency and/or severity of visual hallucinations for people with Parkinson’s disease and Lewy Body Dementia.

I have been seeing patients as part of the study, but I am also an associate Principal Investigator (PI) via the NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research) scheme. This is a six month in-work training programme which allows practical experience for healthcare professionals who have limited research experience.

In my role as a higher trainee research ambassador, my brief involves making trainees more aware of local research, as well as being a link between the trust Research & Development department and psychiatry trainees. My activities have included: disseminating local research news to trainees, attending the LYPFT annual trust forum where research is showcased, supporting my supervising consultant in running a session about research opportunities at a “preparing for consultant practice”, and organizing a teaching session on research for higher trainees as part of the monthly teaching program.

I took a while to work out that psychiatry was the specialty for me but now, I cannot understand why I ever wanted to do anything else! I feel so privileged to spend my working days hearing people’s stories and trying to support them through some of their most vulnerable times, as well as working closely with fantastic colleagues from different backgrounds and disciplines.